

Isle of Man Marks Tour de France, Start to Finish



With some of the world's finest cyclists coming from the Isle of Man, and this year's Tour visiting the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man had good reason to celebrate the 2014 Tour de France with the release of a special edition series of six stamp sheets on July 5th.

Tour de France 2014 returns to the UK for the Grand Depart and this year marks the Tour's fourth visit to Great Britain since 2007, the year that Manxman Mark Cavendish made his first debut—and since then he has gone on to win 25 stages!

Stage one of the 2,276 mile race will see the riders depart from Leeds on the July 5 and tackle the Yorkshire dales to arrive with a sprint finish in Harrogate. This stage could be the best opportunity for Mark Cavendish to don the coveted yellow jersey, symbolic of the race leader.

Stage two will take the riders from the historical city of York, a place which has featured many amateur and professional cycle races over the years to the former industrial center of Sheffield. Yorkshire man Brian Robinson who has supported the Yorkshire Grand Depart appears here on another of the stamp sheets. He was the first British rider to finish the Tour de France (at his first attempt) in 1955, and in 1957 he became the first Briton to win a stage. He then went on to win again in 1959.

Cambridge with its narrow streets and historic buildings is well known for being one of the world's great centers of learning but is also sometimes referred to as the "City of Cycling" and marks the site of departure for the third and final stage in Britain before the cyclists cross the English Channel. This part of the race will see riders within sight of Buckingham Palace in scenes that will evoke memories of the London 2012 Olympics, cycling

race, which finished on the mall and attracted huge crowds. This will be the second time that the Tour has visited the capital.

The final Stages will lead the riders through Ypres for the first time in the Tour, in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, and then through Arenberg Porte du Hainaut which was once a center for mining and is also known as the "hell of the north". Then it's onto Grenoble, a city steeped in cycling history, before heading into Risoul in the French Alps.

The final stage of the Tour takes riders from Evry, past the Cathedral of Resurrection and onto the finish line in the heart of Paris on the Champs Elysées, where the traffic will be closed and the cyclists will experience one of sport's most spectacular backdrops. Another of the six sheets features an image of Bernard Hinault, former French cyclist who won the Tour de France five times and has also played a pivotal role in organizing the Tour De France.

Each sheet captures a legend of the Tour including cycling celebrities such as Bradley Wiggins, Eddie Merckx and Bernard Hinault to name just a few celebrating in their yellow jerseys—along with Mark Cavendish celebrating in his green jersey, symbolic of the sprint leader. Each is also pictured alongside well know buildings or backdrops.

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